

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 13-26 are pending.

Claims 1-6 and 13-26 stand rejected.

Claims 1-6 and 13-27 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Support for these amendments can be found, at least, within paragraphs [0018] and [0028] of the specification.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as purportedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Applicants have amended claim 27 to address the Examiner's concerns. Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is now overcome.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6 and 13-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as purportedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,442,526 ("Vance"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to recite new limitations not found within any teachings or interpretations of Vance. Independent claims 3 and 18 have been amended to recite comparable limitations. Among the limitations Vance fails to teach or suggest is automatically associating an expense item with an activity item, where each activity item of a plurality of activity items is associated with plurality of expense items, and where at least one expense item of one or more expense items cannot be associated with one or more of the plurality of activity items. In other words, for each activity item in the claimed method, there exist one or more expense items that are expensable. However, there will be certain expense items that cannot be associated with certain activity items.

Vance is completely silent on the existence of expense items that cannot be associated with some activity items, in part, because Vance only considers one type of expense report: a travel expense report. *See* Vance, Abstract. Because the claimed invention recites various activity items, some expenses for one activity item may not be appropriate, and therefore not

associable, with another activity item. For example, claim 16 recites limitations that comprehend that one of the activity items may be drafting correspondence and another activity item may be a meeting. For drafting correspondence, there may be postage expenses that are appropriate. However, postage expenses are irrelevant to holding a meeting. Similarly, an array of donuts and coffee may be an appropriate expense for a meeting with a client, however, a donuts and coffee expense does not make sense for an expense report for drafting correspondence. Thus, in the claimed invention, these two types of activities will have expense items that do not apply both activities. In other words, there will be some expense items that cannot be associated with some activity items, as claimed. Because Vance fails to consider anything comparable to the claimed plurality of activity items, it follows that Vance also fails to consider that there will exist some expense items that cannot be associated with some activity items.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that Vance does not provide disclosure of all the elements of independent claims 1, 3, and 18, and dependent claims 2, 4-17, and 19-27 and that these claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections to these claims.

Further, Vance fails to teach or suggest the elements of dependent claim 2 for reasons comparable to those presented with regard to the infirmities of Vance described earlier in the prosecution of the present matter vis-à-vis independent claim 1, in its erstwhile state. As noted in this regard, Vance fails to consider a plurality of activity items, as claimed. Because Vance fails to consider the claimed plurality of expense items, it follows that Vance also fails to show, teach or suggest the initial establishment of the associations between the plurality of activity items and expense items. In other words, because Vance fails to show, teach or suggest the claimed generation of an expense report, Vance also fails to show, teach or suggest the claimed establishing the associations between the activity items and expense items upon which the expense report generation depends.

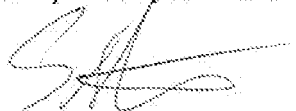
For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that Vance does not provide disclosure of all the elements of dependent claim 2 and that this claim is in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections to this claim.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5084.

If any extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) are required in order for this submission to be considered timely, Applicants hereby petition for such extensions. Applicants also hereby authorize that any fees due for such extensions or any other fee associated with this submission, as specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17, be charged to deposit account 502306.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric A. Stephenson
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 38,321
Telephone: (512) 439-5093
Facsimile: (512) 439-5099